

Multiple Heterosexual Contacts

In Virginia, the high risk group for HIV/AIDS known as “Multiple Heterosexual Contacts” is defined as individuals having sexual intercourse with ten or more lifetime heterosexual partners, or three or more heterosexual partners in the previous twelve months. This group is also referred to as ‘High Risk Heterosexuals’, because of the increased risk of HIV exposure associated with multiple heterosexual partners. In Virginia, 2% (n=31) of the diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases in 2006 reported a risk of infection as multiple heterosexual contacts.

Age

Individuals ages 20-29 accounted for almost one-third (30%) of diagnosed cases of HIV/AIDS during 2006, reporting a risk of infection as multiple heterosexual contacts. This was followed by individuals aged 30-39 at diagnosis and accounted for 42% of the diagnosed cases of HIV/AIDS .

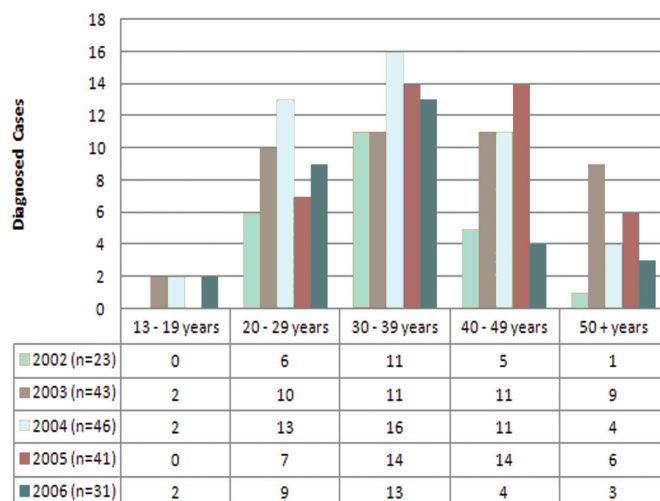
Race

In Virginia, during 2006, the majority (68%) of HIV/AIDS cases with a risk of infection reported as multiple heterosexual contacts were Black. Black women are most likely to be infected with HIV as a result of heterosexual contact (CDC, 2005). They may not be aware of their male partners’ possible risk factors for HIV infection, such as unprotected sex with multiple partners, bisexuality, or injection drug use (Hader et. al, 2001, Millett et. al, 2005). The Hispanic population accounted for 25% of the risk category multiple heterosexual contact diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, in 2006, followed by Whites (10%).

Gender

Young women are at risk for sexually transmitted HIV for several reasons, including biologic vulnerability, lack of recognition of their partners’ risk factors, inequality in relationships, and having sex with older men who are more likely to be infected with HIV (CDC, 2004). Gender roles for heterosexual interactions appear to sanction men’s sexual risk-taking, especially the pursuit of multiple sexual partners (O’Sullivan, 2006). Majority (74%) of the cases diagnosed in 2006 among those with multiple heterosexual contacts were men. Eight cases (26%) were diagnosed among women.

Figure 1 Diagnosed HIV/AIDS, risk multiple heterosexual contact, by age (2002-2006)



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